

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

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ASUNCION FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SHELTON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE ENTITLED SOMOZA GETS
U.S. WORD TO LOOSEN REINS BY JEREMIAH O'LEARY DATED
NOVEMBER 17, 1977.

1. THE FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AFOREMENTIONED ARTICLE:

"THE UNITED STATES HAS SENT WORD TO PRESIDENT ANASTASIO
SOMOZA LINKING FURTHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO NICARAGUA'S
RECORD ON HUMAN AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND, IN A VEILED
WAY, EXPRESSING DISPLEASURE AT THE CONDUCT OF HIS
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AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, GUILLERMO SEVILLA SACASA.

"THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO NICARAGUA, MAURICIO SOLAUN, WAS
INSTRUCTED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO DELIVER THE DEMARCHE,
A VERBAL DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION, TO SOMOZA ON TUESDAY.

"THE MISSION WAS CARRIED OUT ABOUT THE SAME TIME THAT THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES PERMANENT COUNCIL WAS
VOTING 24 TO 0 IN SUPPORT OF A RESOLUTION THAT NICARAGUA
AND COSTA RICA NOT PERMIT THEIR TERRITORY TO BE USED

BY TERRORISTS ACTIVE AGAINST THE OTHER AND THAT THE
NICARAGUA AIR FORCE BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT ATTACKS IT

CONDUCTS AGAINST SANDINISTA REBELS ALONG THE FRONTIER
WITH COSTA RICA.

"THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE DEMARCHE WAS TO URGE SOMOZA TO
HOLD TALKS WITH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION FORCES IN NICARAGUA
TO OPEN UP THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, ACCORDING TO U.S. OFFIC-
IALS.

"BUT THE MOVE ALSO WAS INTENDED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT
THE UNITED STATES DID NOT APPRECIATE WHAT WERE TERMED
NICARAGUAN ATTEMPTS TO MISLEAD THE OAS AD HOC COMMITTEE
WHICH WENT TO THE TWO CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES
RECENTLY TO INVESTIGATE A SANDINISTA ATTACK ON THE
NICARAGUAN TOWN OFF SAN CARLOS AND THE COUNTERATTACK
BY NICARAGUAN AIRCRAFT ON COSTA RICAN SOIL.

"SEVILLA SACASA, WHO HAS BEEN NICARAGUA'S AMBASSADOR TO
WASHINGTON SINCE 1943 AND IS DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC
CORPS, WAS NOT MENTIONED BY NAME IN THE DEMARCHE DELIVER-
ED BY SOLAUN. BUT SOME OFFICIALS AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT
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WERE OUTRAGED AT WHAT THEY CALLED SEVILLA SACASA'S
"EXTRAORDINARY AND INAPPROPRIATE" BEHAVIOR TOWARD
ROBERT E. WHITE, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMITTEE.

"ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE TERENCE TODMAN COULD NOT
BE REACHED FOR COMMENT, BUT OTHER DIPLOMATS SAID THE
STATE DEPARTMENT FINALLY DECIDED TO REFER TO THE INCIDENTS
INVOLVING SEVILLA SACASA AND WHITE ONLY IN THE MOST
GENERAL TERMS.

"SEVERAL SOURCES SAID THAT SEVILLA SACASA ACTED IN A
MOST UNDIPLOMATIC WAY TOWARD WHITE IN ONE INCIDENT WHICH
TOOK PLACE IN THE DELEGATES' LOUNGE AT THE OAS BUILD-
ING HERE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE LEFT FOR CENTRAL AMERICA
AND IN ANOTHER IN THE NICARAGUAN CAPITAL.

"WHITE, WHO LEAVES THIS WEEK TO BECOME U.S. AMBASSADOR
TO PARAGUAY, WAS NOT REACHABLE FOR QUESTIONS, BUT UNIM-
PEACHABLE SOURCES GAVE THIS ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED:

"WHEN WHITE AND OTHER OAS DIPLOMATS WERE GETTING READY
TO GO TO THE SCENE OF THE BORDER INCIDENTS, SEVILLA
SACASA APPROACHED WHITE IN THE LOUNGE AND ALLEGEDLY
CLAIMED TO BE WELL AWARE THAT WHITE WAS KNOWN FOR ANTI-
SOMOZA ATTITUDES.

"THE NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR REPORTEDLY WARNED WHITE TO STAY AWAY FROM OPPOSITION GROUPS IN MANAGUA AND SAID

NICARAGUA WOULD EXPECT A "BALANCED" REPORT FROM WHITE. INFORMED SOURCES SAID SEVILLA SACASA MADE MORE HEAVY-HANDED COMMENTS WHEN THE COMMITTEE ARRIVED IN MANAGUA AND REPORTEDLY CAUTIONED WHITE THAT SEVILLA SACASA WOULD KNOW EVERY MOVE THE AMERICAN DIPLOMAT MADE.

"WHITE IS WIDELY KNOWN IN NICARAGUA FROM HIS MORE THAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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TWO YEARS OF SERVICE AS DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION UNDER FORMER AMBASSADOR TURNER B. SHELTON AND IS CONSIDERED, IN TURN, MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT NICARAGUA.

"U.S. OFFICIALS HERE MADE NO EFFORT TO PLAY DOWN THEIR INDIGNATION AT THE WAY SEVILLA SACASA TREATED WHITE, BUT THEY INSISTED THAT THE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION TO SOMOZA BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WAS NOT SOLELY PROMPTED BY THE INCIDENTS.

"THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE DEMARCHE, WHICH TOUCHED ON SEVERAL MATTERS OF CONCERN TO WASHINGTON, WAS SAID TO BE A STRONG SUGGESTION THAT SOMOZA GIVE A FREER REIN TO DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS.

"IT WAS UNDERSTOOD SOMOZA WAS INFORMED IN DETAIL OF THE REASONS WHY THE SO-CALLED CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE, AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP WEIGHING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AND THEIR RELATION TO U.S. ASSISTANCE, LAST MONDAY APPROVED ONLY TWO OF SEVEN LOANS FOR NICARAGUA.

"THE LOANS APPROVED WERE THOSE THAT BENEFITED ONLY THE NEEDY AND INCLUDED FUNDS FOR RURAL HEALTH CARE AND RURAL SANITATION. THE REST OF THE LOANS WERE DEFERRED FOR THREE MONTHS SO THAT THE CHRISTOPHER PANEL COULD SEE WHETHER SOMOZA WAS CONFORMING TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE.

"LAST SEPTEMBER THE COMMITTEE, HEADED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE WARREN CHRISTOPHER, APPROVED 2.5 MILLION DOLS IN MILITARY SALES TO NICARAGUA BUT PUT A HOLD ON 12 MILLION DOLS IN ECONOMIC AID FOR NICARAGUA. IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT THIS APPARENT INCONSISTENCY WAS
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BECAUSE THE MILITARY FUNDS WOULD LAPSE IF NOT APPROVED

BY SEPTEMBER 30, THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR, WHEREAS
ECONOMIC AID MEASURES CAN BE RETRIEVED DEPENDING ON
NICARAGUA'S PERFORMANCE.

"THE CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE MAKES ITS DECISIONS SOLELY ON
HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS. ITS MEMBERS INCLUDE OFFICIALS

FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
AND THE AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE
PANEL HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY POWERFUL IN DECIDING ON
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICIES.

"STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THEY HAVE NOT YET HEARD
FROM SOLAUN HOW SOMOZA REACTED TO THE DEMARCHE. SEVILLA
SACASA ALSO COULD NOT BE REACHED FOR COMMENT. HE IS
KNOWN AS A TIRELESS PARTYGOER AND SOMETIMES DELIVERS
ATTENTION-GETTING ORATORY IN EITHER FLOWERY OR THUNDEROUS
TONES DEPENDING ON HIS MOOD OR THE SITUATION. END ARTICLE.

2. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR USE AT NOON
PRESS BRIEFING FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18 IN RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE
QUESTION ARISING FROM PRECEDING ARTICLE. FIRST ANSWER
USED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO OUR COMMENT RE
ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING AMBASSADOR SEVILLA SACASA.
FOLLOWING PORTIONS WERE RELEASED AS BACKGROUND.

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT THE U.S. MADE A DEMARCHE TO NICARAGUA
COMPLAINING ABOUT SEVILLA SACASA'S ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION
WITH THE OAS COMMISSION INVESTIGATING THE RECENT NICARAGUA-
COSTA RICA BORDER INCIDENTS?

A. NO COMPLAINT ABOUT THE NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR TO THE
U.S. HAS BEEN MADE. WE ESTEEM AMBASSADOR SEVILLA
SACASA WHO FOR A GREAT MANY YEARS HAS BEEN A FAITHFUL
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REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS GOVERNMENT HERE. THE DEPARTMENT
DID MAKE A GENERAL DEMARCHE TO NICARAGUA RECENTLY. ITS
PRIMARY PURPOSE WAS TO EXPRESS U.S. CONCERN OVER NICARAGUAN
HANDLING OF THE INVESTIGATION IN NICARAGUA BY THE OAS AD
HOC COMMISSION. NO NAMES OR SPECIFIC ACTIONS WERE MENTION-
ED.

Q. WHAT WAS THE BASIS FOR YOUR COMPLAINT?

A. I CAN GIVE YOU NO FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE SUBSTANCE
OF OUR DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION.

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS WERE OUTRAGED
AT SEVILLA SACASA'S "EXTRAORDINARY AND INAPPROPRIATE"

BEHAVIOR TOWARD ROBERT E. WHITE, A MEMBER OF THE OAS AD HOC COMMISSION?

A. I HAVE NO COMMENT TO MAKE ON THAT ASPECT OF THE STORY THAT APPEARED IN THE PRESS. (NOTE: AMBASSADOR

WHITE WAS REPORTED TO BE UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT; IN FACT HE LEFT TO TAKE UP HIS ASSIGNMENT IN PARAGUAY ON WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 15.)

Q. DID WE URGE SOMOZA TO HOLD TALKS WITH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION FORCES IN NICARAGUA?

A. THE U.S. HAS CONSISTENTLY EXPRESSED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE BROADEST POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN ANY COUNTRY. WE HAVE REITERATED THIS VIEW TO THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA.

Q. WHAT LOANS FOR NICARAGUA HAS THE U.S. APPROVED?
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A. A DEPARTMENT DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO SUPPORT THREE IBRD/IDB LOANS WHICH WOULD DIRECTLY BENEFIT THE NEEDY IN NICARAGUA. THE LOANS ARE FOR RURAL SANITATION, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND IMPROVED WATER SUPPLY. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THESE LOANS IS 29.3 MILLION DOLS.

Q. IS IT TRUE THE DEPARTMENT HAS POSTPONED DECISION FOR THREE MONTHS ON OTHER LOANS PENDING FOR NICARAGUA?

A. WE ARE SEEKING TO DEFER CONSIDERATION OF SEVERAL OTHER LOANS BY THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. A DECISION ON THESE LOANS WILL BE MADE IN COMING MONTHS ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVAILING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NICARAGUA.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE AID LOANS AMOUNTING TO 12 MILLION DOLS ON WHICH DECISION WAS POSTPONED BY THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT A MONTH AGO?

A. THOSE LOANS ARE STILL ON THE AGENDA FOR ACTIVE CONSIDERATION.

Q. HAS THE U.S. WITHDRAWN IS SUPPORT FROM SOMOZA?

A. WHILE THERE IS A LONG TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA, WE HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY. WE ARE PLEASED AT THE RECENT IMPROVEMENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED PROGRESS IN THE AREA OF HUMAN

RIGHTS. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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